Selections from Isaac Penington

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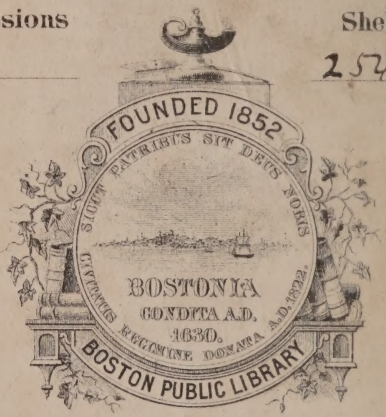

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Selections

FROM

ISAAC PENINGTON.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE name of Isaac Penington is comparatively little known at the present day except among his fellow-believers, the Society of Friends, but his spirit was so heavenly, his temper so forgiving, his spiritual insight so deep, that his words have divine nourishment for the soul. His letters, (often written from prison,) to friends beset with almost every form of temptation and trial, are so full of faith and peace, that they seem worthy to be compared with the spiritual letters of Fénelon. These selections are made from a collection of his letters published a number of years ago, with some passages from his other writings. I am indebted for important portions of the introduction, to "The Penns and Peningtons of the Seventeenth Century," by Maria Webb.

The author of "Reminiscences of Thought and Feeling," expresses in the following man-

ner her gratitude for the help she received from these writings. She speaks of "two books which circumstances had thrown in my way. One of these I have already mentioned as the 'Letters of William Law;' the other was the 'Letters of Isaac Penington,' one of the earliest members amongst the primitive Quakers. Great as was the benefit I derived from Law's book, it was secondary to that which the Quaker's afforded me. 'Being dead,' he spake indeed to me; and, were it permitted to the spirits of the departed to hover over the souls of those who are deriving benefit from their ministrations, I could well believe, that, in the dreary hours and dreadful scenes that I was now about to enter upon, the spirit of that saint must have been near me, beholding with holy satisfaction some of the fruits of his labors. I do not believe it would have been possible for me to have lived in the possession of my senses, under the agonizing trials that were at hand, but for that 'preparation of the heart which is of the Lord,' and to which the ministry of those precious letters so mainly contrib-

uted. How often has the turbulence of my heart been quieted by a few simple words, addressed, as he supposed, to a sufferer of a hundred and seventy years ago, but destined to bring a message of peace to one as yet unborn!"

Mrs. Schimmelpenninck, in her Autobiography, says, "On the table were the works of the venerable Isaac Penington, whose memory, with that of the legislator Penn, and the genius of Milton, have consecrated the little village of Chalfont. Few have probably read these books which my cousin loved so well, without a blessing, and without drawing nearer in soul to that God who was the bond of union in that blessed society."

Isaac Penington was born about the year 1617, and was the eldest son of Isaac Penington of London, who was many years an Alderman, and for two years successively Mayor of the city, and also a noted Member of the Long Parliament. These letters were written between the time when Isaac Penington joined the Society of Friends, which

was about the year 1658, and his death, in 1679.

He was well educated, and had ability; as William Penn says, "a man quick in apprehension, fruitful in conception, of a lively wit and intelligence, but adorned with an extraordinary mildness, and engaging sweetness of disposition."

Penington himself says: "My heart from my childhood was pointed towards the Lord, whom I feared and longed after from my tender years. I felt that I could not be satisfied with, nor indeed seek after the things of this perishing world, but I desired a true sense of, and unity with, that which abideth forever. There was something still within me which leavened and balanced my spirit almost continually; but I knew it not distinctly so as to turn to it, and give up to it entirely and understandingly.

"In this temper of mind, I earnestly sought after the Lord, applying myself to hear sermons, and read the best books I could meet with, but especially the Scriptures, which were very sweet and savory to me. Yea, I

very earnestly desired and pressed after the knowledge of the Scriptures, but was much afraid of receiving men's interpretations of them, or of fastening any interpretations upon them myself; but waited much, and prayed much, that from the Spirit of the Lord I might receive the true understanding of them, and that He would endue me with that knowledge which I might feel to be sanctifying and saving.

"But I became exceedingly entangled about election and reprobation; having drunk in that doctrine according as it was then held forth by the strictest of those that were termed Puritans, fearing lest, notwithstanding all my desires and seeking after the Lord, He might in His decree have passed by me. I felt it would be bitter for me to bear His wrath, and to be separated from His love for evermore; yet if He had so decreed, it would be, and I should, notwithstanding fair beginnings and hopes, fall away, and perish at last."

For years he suffered from distress of mind in consequence of these doctrines. At last, he found peace through the teaching of some

of the people called by themselves Friends, and Quakers by their opponents; and united himself with them in 1658. He speaks of having "now at length met with the true way, and walked with the Lord therein, where in daily certainty, yea, full assurance of faith and of understanding, is obtained. Blessed be the Lord! there are many at this day who can truly and faithfully witness that they have been brought by the Lord to this state.

"We have thus learned of Him not by the high, striving, aspiring mind, but by lying low, and being contented with a little; if but a crumb of bread, yet bread; if but a drop of water, yet water. And we have been contented with it, and thankful to the Lord for it. Nor was it by thoughtfulness and wise searching, or deep considering with our own wisdom and reason that we obtained this; but in the still, meek, and humble waiting have we found it."

In 1654, he married Mary, the widow of Sir William Springett. She was a woman of unusual powers and attractions, and a great aid and comfort to her husband. She had

also been seeking for something better than those around her seemed to have found, and deeply sympathized in Isaac Penington's religious perplexities and trials.

Thomas Ellwood says, "In his family, he was a true pattern of goodness and piety. To his wife he was a most affectionate husband, to his children a loving and tender father, to his servants a mild and gentle master, to his friends a firm and fast friend, to the poor compassionate and open-handed, and to all courteous and kind. Very zealous he was for the Truth, unwearied in promoting it, bold and undaunted in the defence of it, faithful in his testimony to it, patient and cheerful in his suffering for it. . . .

"As it was given him to believe in Christ, so he had also to suffer for his sake; his imprisonments being many, and some of them long; which he underwent with great constancy and quietness of mind. He was first imprisoned in the year 1661, in Aylesbury Gaol, for worshiping God in his own house; and endured great hardships for seventeen weeks, in a cold, incommodious room, with-

out a chimney, great part of the time in winter; from which usage, his body contracted so great a disorder, that, for several weeks, he was not able to turn himself in his bed. He was imprisoned five times after this, on account of his religious professions; [his last imprisonment continued twenty-one months, beginning in 1672,] and being of a tender constitution, was in danger of losing his life from the hardships he endured."

A Friend, named Robert Jones, who was his fellow-sufferer in several of his imprisonments, gives the following description of his conduct. "Being made willing by the power of God to suffer with great patience, cheerfulness, contentedness, and true nobility of spirit, he was a good example to me and others. I do not remember that ever I saw him cast down or dejected in his spirit in the time of his close confinement; or ever heard him speak hardly of those that persecuted him; for he was of that temper as to love enemies, and to do good to those that hated him; having received a measure of that vir-

tue from Christ his Master that taught him to do so.

"Indeed, I may truly say, in the prison he was a help to the weak, being made instrumental in the hand of the Lord for that end. Oh! the remembrance of the glory that did often overshadow us in the place of our confinement; so that indeed the prison was made by the Lord, who was powerfully with us, as a pleasant palace. I was often, with many more, by those streamings of life that did many times flow through him, greatly overcome with a sense of the pure presence and overcoming love of our God, that was plentifully shed abroad in our hearts." When we remember the condition of the prisons in those days, their evil and unwholesome smells, and destitution of every comfort, this testimony to the power of the Spirit over external things is very striking.

After his last imprisonment, he enjoyed about six years of unmolested peace with his family at Woodside, Amersham, before his death, which was in 1679. He had several children, some of whose descendants are

now living in Philadelphia. His wife's daughter by her first marriage, Gulielma Springett, a very lovely person, married William Penn, and the union between the two families was close and tender.

William Penn says of him, "As he was a light in the church, so he was a blessing to his own family; a most chaste and loving husband, a very tender and prudent father, and a just and kind master,—I will add, and a good neighbor, and a most secret and firm friend: of all unapt to believe ill, but never to report it, much less to do it to any; a man that ruled his tongue, swift to hear, slow to speak; but when he did speak, he was serious, yet sweet, and not uncheerful. Being thus fit to live, he was prepared to die, and had nothing else to do, when that summons was served upon him, which was in the sixty-third year of his age; at that time, it pleased the Lord, he fell very sick, under a sharp and painful distemper, which hastened his dissolution. However, the anguish of that bitter exercise could give no shake to internal peace, so well established before it came; but he

died, as he lived, in the faith which overcomes the world."

Many testimonies to the Christian character and life of Penington were published.

Portions of the affectionate tribute of his wife, Mary Penington, will fitly conclude this little sketch. M. W. T.

April, 1892.

MARY PENINGTON, HER TESTIMONY CONCERNING HER DEAR HUSBAND.

WHILST I keep silent touching thee, oh! thou blessed of the Lord and His people, my heart burneth within me. I must make mention of thee, for thou wast a most pleasant plant of renown, planted by the right hand of the Lord; "and thou tookest deep root downwards, and sprangest upward." The dew of heaven fell on thee, and made thee fruitful, and thy fruit was fragrant and most delightful.

Oh! where shall I begin to recount the Lord's remarkable dealings with thee? He

set His love on thee, oh! thou who wert one of the Lord's peculiar choice. Thy very babyish days declared of what stock and lineage thou wert. Thou desiredst "the sincere milk of the word as a new-born babe," even in the end of thy age; and who can declare how thou hadst travelled towards the Holy Land in thy very infancy as to days? Who can tell what thy soul hath felt in thy travel? Oh! the heavenly, bright, living openings that were given to thee many years past. God's light shone round about thee. Such a state as I have never known of in any other, have I heard thee declare of. But this it did please the Lord to withdraw, and leave thee desolate and mourning many a day—weary of the night and of the day—naked and poor in spirit—sad, distressed and bowed down. Thou refusedst to be comforted, because thou couldst not feed on that which was not bread from heaven.

In that state I married thee; my love was drawn to thee, because I found thou sawest the deceit of all notions. Thou didst remain as one who refused to be comforted by any-

thing that had only the *appearance* of religion, till "He came to His temple who is Truth and no lie." For all these shows of religion were very manifest to thee, so that thou wert sick and weary of them all.

This little testimony to thy hidden life, my dear and precious one, in a day and time when none of the Lord's gathered people knew thy face, nor were in any measure acquainted with thy many sorrows, have I stammered out, that it might not be forgotten. But now that the day is broken forth, and thou wert so eminently gathered into it, and a faithful publisher of it, I leave this bright state of thine to be declared by the sons of the morning, who have witnessed the rising of that bright star of righteousness in thee, and its guiding thee to the Saviour, even Jesus, the First and the Last.

Ah me! he is gone! he that none exceeded in kindness, in tenderness, in love inexpressible to the relation as a wife. Next to the love of God in Christ Jesus to my soul, was his love precious and delightful to me. My bosom one! that was as my guide and

counsellor, my pleasant companion! my tender sympathizing friend! as near to the sense of my pain, sorrow, grief, and trouble as it was possible.

Yet this great help and benefit is gone; and I, a poor worm, a very little one to him, compassed about with many infirmities, through mercy let him go without an unadvised word of discontent, or inordinate grief. Nay, further, such was the great kindness the Lord showed to me in that hour, that my spirit ascended with him in that very moment that the spirit left his body, and I saw him safe in his own mansion, and rejoiced with him there. From this sight my spirit returned again, to perform my duty to his outward tabernacle.

This testimony to dear Isaac Penington is from the greatest loser of all that had a share in his life,

MARY PENINGTON.

Written at my house at Woodside, the 27th of 2d Month, 1680, between Twelve and One at night, while I was watching with my sick child.

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

LETTERS OF ISAAC PENINGTON.

I.

OF A GROWTH IN GRACE, AMIDST DISTRESSING EXERCISES OF SPIRIT.

To Bridget Atley.

MY DEAR FRIEND: — If thy heart come to feel the Spirit of God, and to wait upon Him in the measure of His life, He will be tender of thee as a father of his child, and His love will be naturally breaking forth towards thee.

This is the end of all His dealings with thee, to bring thee hither, to make thee fit and capable of entering and abiding here. And

He hath changed, and doth change thy spirit daily; though it be as the shooting up of the corn, whose growth cannot be discerned at present by the most observing eye, but it is very manifest afterwards that it hath grown.

My heart is refreshed for thy sake, rejoicing in the Lord's goodness towards thee; and that the blackness of darkness begins to scatter from thee, though the enemy be still striving the same way to enter and distress thee again.

But wait to feel the relieving measure of life, and heed not distressing thoughts, when they rise ever so strongly in thee; nay, though they have entered thee, fear them not, but *be still awhile, not believing in the power which thou feelest they have over thee*, and it will fall on a sudden.

It is good for thy spirit, and greatly to thy advantage, to be much and variously exercised by the Lord. Thou dost not know what the Lord hath already done, and what He is yet doing for thee therein.

Ah! how precious it is to be poor, weak, low, empty, naked, distressed for Christ's

sake, that way may be made for the power and glory of His life in the heart. And, O learn, daily more and more, to trust Him and hope in Him, and not to be affrighted with any amazement, nor to be taken up with the sight of the present thing; but wait for the shutting of thy own eye upon every occasion, and for the opening of the eye of God in thee, and for the sight of things therewith, as they are from Him.

It is no matter what the enemy strives to do in thy heart, nor how distressed thy condition is, but what the Lord will do for thee, which is with patience to be waited for at His season in every condition.

And though sin overtake, let not that bow down; nor let the eye open in thee, which stands poring at that: but wait for the healing through the chastisement, and know there is an Advocate, who, in that hour, hath an office of love and a faithful heart towards thee.

Yea, though thou canst not believe, yet be not dismayed thereat; thy Advocate, who undertakes thy cause, hath faith to give: only

do thou sink into, or at least pant after the hidden measure of life, which is not in that which distresseth, disturbeth, and filleth thee with thoughts, fears, troubles, anguish, darknesses, terrors, and the like; no, no! but in that which inclines to the patience, to the stillness, to the hope, to the waiting, to the silence, before the Father.

This is the same in nature, with the most refreshing and glorious-visiting life, though not the same in appearance; and if thy mind be turned to it, not minding but overlooking the other, thou wilt find some of the same virtue springing up in thy heart and soul, at least to stay thee.

In and through these things, thou wilt become deeply acquainted with the nature of God, and know the wonderful riches and virtue of His life, the mightiness of His power, and the preciousness of His love, tenderness of His mercy, and infiniteness of His wisdom, the glory also, and exactness of His righteousness, etc.

Thou wilt be made large in spirit to receive and drink in abundantly of them; and the

snares of the enemy will be so known to thee and discerned, the way of help so manifest and easy, that their strength will be broken, and the poor entangled bird will fly away singing, from the nets and entanglements of the fowler; and praises will spring up, and great love in thy heart to the Forgiver and Redeemer.

Oh! wait, hope, trust, look up to thy God! look over that which stands between; come into His mercy! let in the faith which openeth the way of life, which will shut out the doubting and distrusting mind, and will close up the wrong eye that letteth in reasonings and temptations, the wrong sense, and death with them.

Thus mayest thou witness, in and through thy Redeemer, the abundance of His life and peace. J. P.

II.

THE COMPASSION OF THE SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK TOWARDS THE WEAK, ETC. HOW THEY SHOULD FOLLOW HIM.

TO FRIENDS:—He that is weak and foolish among the lambs, continually ready to wander, both out of the pastures and from the fold, and thus to betray his life into the hands of the enemy;—he who is continually scattering and squandering away what the Lord in mercy gathers for him, and freely bestows upon him; who, through drowsiness and carelessness, hath lost the benefit of, and forfeited the sweet and tender visitations of the Most High, and is now become dry, dead, barren, thick, earthy;—O my God! let *that* soul feel the stirrings of the springs of life, and find some encouragements from Thee, to hope in the free and large mercies of the Shepherd of Israel, who casteth not off His sheep because of their wanderings, because of their backslidings, be-

cause of their infirmities, because of their diseases, nay, not because of their hardness; but pursues them with His love, findeth them out, visiteth with his correcting hand according to their need, woundeth with his sword, and melteth in His fire, until He hath made them tender and pliable, and then He pours in the fresh oil of His salvation and sweetly healeth them.

O my Friends and brethren in the pure life! be faithful to the Lord in returning to Him all the incomes of His Spirit; follow on in every drawing of His love, while any of the virtue of it lasts upon your spirits. Walk with Him all the day long, and wait for Him all the night season.

And, in case of erring from Him, or sinning grievously against Him, be not discouraged; for He is a God of mercies, and delighteth in pardoning and forgiving much and very often. What tender mother can be more ready to forgive and embrace the child, that appears broken and afflicted with her sore displeasure!

Yea, *He* gives brokenness, *He* melteth the

heart, that he may be tender towards, and embrace it in His arms of reconciliation, and in the peace of His Spirit.

O my dear companions, and fellow-travellers in spirit towards the land of the living! *All* the motions of the life are cross to the corrupt [part]—dwell [in the life,] draw the yoke close about your necks, that ye may come into unity with the life, and the corrupt be worn out.

Take the yoke, the cross, the contrariety of Jesus upon your spirits daily; that that may be worn out which hinders the unity, and so, ye may feel your King and Saviour exalted upon His throne in your hearts: this is your rest, peace, life, kingdom, and crown forever. I. P.

III.

ON SEARCHING FOR THE HIDDEN TREASURE, AND SELLING ALL FOR IT.

To Catherine Pordage.

THIS word of advice hath been much in my heart to thee this morning: Sit down and count the cost of ploughing up thy field, and of searching after the hidden treasure of pure and true wisdom, and consider seriously, whether thou canst sell all for it, both inward and outward riches; that, if thou do set thy hand to the plough, thou mayest not look back after anything else, within or without, but mayest be content and satisfied with the pearl of true wisdom and life alone.

Now, if thou be truly willing in God's sight thus to do, thou must singly give up to follow the Lord in the leadings of His Spirit, out of all the ways of thy own wisdom and knowledge, out of all things wherein thou hast a life and delight out of Him.

Thou must not determine what thou hast a life in, but the Lord must search thy heart; and He will soon show thee (if thy heart be naked and open before Him, willing to hear and learn of him), somewhat in thy heart, somewhat in thy ways, somewhat in thy words, thoughts, etc., which is contrary to His pure life and Spirit; and then, that must be denied and given up immediately.

This enhances the price of Truth as to thee, that thou must part with more for it, than will be required of many others; yet, if thou be faithful to the Lord, and diligently follow Him in the simplicity, Truth will at length recompense thee for all thy labors, sorrows, and travels. I. P.

11th of First Month, 1670.

IV.

A CHRISTIAN SALUTATION.

To Elizabeth Walmsley.

DEAR FRIEND:—My heart was exceedingly melted within me at the reading of thy precious and tender lines; yea, indeed, I was quite overcome, and was fain several times to break off, the freshness and strength of life in them did so flow in upon me; and I said, again and again, in my heart, It is the very voice of my Father's child, whose sound did deeply reach to, and refresh my very soul.

And this my heart saith, Blessed be my God, for His tender mercies to thee, in visiting, leading, and preserving thee to this day, and for teaching His Spirit thus to speak in thee.

Oh! let His praise live and abound in thy breast forever. And in the flowings and streamings of this life, remember me at the

throne of my Father's mercy, by which alone I live, and have hope before Him.

May the mercies, blessing, and pure presence of my God fill thy soul, and rest upon thee forever! Amen! Amen!

Thus prayeth for thee thy unfeigned Friend, and dear lover of the pure seed of life in thee,

I. P.

Mind my dear love to thy sister, whose inward welfare and prosperity I desire, even that she may be one with thee in the Spirit and life of God.

Aylesbury Gaol.

19th of Eighth Month, 1665.

V.

THE DUTY OF BEING CONTENT WITH WHAT IS MADE KNOWN.

RETIRE out of all necessities, according to the apprehension of the reasoning mind; and judge that only necessary which God, in His eternal wisdom and love, proportions out unto us.

And when thou comest hither, thou wilt come to thy rest; and, as thou abidest here, thou wilt abide in thy soul's true rest, and know the preciousness of that lesson, and of whom thou art to learn it, even, *in every state to be content.*

VI.

ADVICE TO ONE RESPECTING THE DARK SUGGESTIONS OF THE ENEMY.

"LEARN of me, take my yoke upon you," saith Christ, "and ye shall find rest to your souls." Wouldst thou feel thy soul's rest in Christ? Thou must know His voice, hear it, learn daily of Him, become His disciple; take up, from *His* nature, what is contrary to *thy* nature.

And then, as thy nature is worn out, and His nature comes up in thee, thou wilt find all easy; all that is of life easy, and transgression hard — unbelief hard: yea, thou wilt find it very hard and unnatural, when His nature is grown up in thee, either to distrust the Lord or hearken to His enemy.

Oh ! that thou mayest find ability to watch against that which bows down, and not so let in, as thou hast done exceedingly, to the grievous wounding and distressing of thy soul ! For the enemy's dark suggestions work according to their nature ; and, if thou let them lie upon thee, how can they but darken, afflict, and perplex thee ?

Therefore, in the evil hour, fly from all things that thus arise in thee ; and lie still, feel thy stay, till His light, which "makes manifest," arise in thee, and clear up things to thee.

And think not the time of darkness long ; but watch, that thy heart be kept empty, and thy mind clear of thoughts and belief of things, till He bring in somewhat, which thou mayest safely receive.

Therefore, say to thy thoughts and to thy belief of things, (according to the representation of the dark power, in the time of thy darkness,) "Get thee hence !"

And, if that will not do, look up to the Lord to speak to them ; and to keep them out, if they be not already entered, or to

thrust them out if they be already got in. And, if He do not so presently, or for a long time, yet do not murmur or think much, but wait till He do.

Yea, though they violently thrust themselves upon thee, and seem to have entered thy mind, yet let them be as strangers to thee; receive them not, believe them not, know them not, own them not; and thy bosom will, notwithstanding, be chaste in the eye of the Lord, though they may seem to thee to have defiled thee.

Look up to the Father, that thou mayest learn this of Him: and, becoming faithful to Him therein, thou wilt find thy darkness abate, and its strength more and more broken in thee; and thou wilt not only feel and taste a little now and then, but also come to possess and inherit, and rejoice before the Lord in thy portion.

Thy Friend in the Truth, which changeth not, but is pure, and preserveth pure forever, I. P.

From Aylesbury Gaol.

28th of Seventh Month, 1667.

VII.

To Friends of Truth in and about the Two Chalfonts.

O MY DEAR FRIENDS! that that may be kept down in you, which is forward to judge, to approve or disapprove; and may the weighty judgment of the Spirit be waited for!

And, Oh! do not meddle with talking about others, which eats out the inward life, and may exalt your spirits out of your place, and above your proper growth; be as the weaned child—simple, naked, meek, humble, tender; easily led by, and subjected to the Father: so will ye grow in that which is of God, and be preserved out of that which hunteth after the pure life to betray and destroy it.

VIII.

THE DAY OF GOD'S POWER AND LOVE.

To John Mannock.

NOW, dear Friend, (for, so far as thy heart is touched by God's Spirit, and answereth thereto, thou art dear unto me,) mind thy condition, and wait on the Lord in humility of heart, and in subjection to what He inwardly, by His Spirit, daily makes manifest; that thou mayest come into the obedience of the Truth daily; that thou mayest daily feel the change which is wrought in the heart and conscience by the holy, eternal, ever-living power; that so thou mayest witness according to the Scriptures, "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit."

And then thou wilt feel that this birth of the Spirit cannot fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but will be warring, and fighting the good fight of faith, in the power of life, against them; and thus, in faithfulness to the Truth, and

waiting upon the Lord, thou shalt witness an overcoming in His due time.

O the conquering faith, the overcoming life and power of the Spirit! We cannot but speak of those things; and cry up the perfect gift, and the power of Him, who is not only able to perfect His work in the heart, but delights so to do; and even to tread down Satan under the feet of those, that wait in patience for the perfect conquest; for nothing else will fully satisfy.

The rest, the peace, the liberty, the virtue of the gospel, is not fully known or enjoyed, while there remains any sin to sting and trouble.

Thou hast found the pearl; the Lord, in mercy to thee, has discovered to thee the true pearl. Now, this remains; that thou be a wise merchant, selling all to purchase it. Thou must keep back nothing. Christ, the living Truth, the holy power of righteousness, must be dearer to thee than all. If father, mother, livelihood, liberty, friendship, outward advantages, etc., or anything else, be dearer to thee than Him, He will look upon

thee as unworthy of Him; and cannot but turn from thee, and suffer hardness and darkness to come again upon thee.

Therefore, prize the day of thy visitation from the holy God, from the God of mercy and salvation; and be faithful in the little, in the day of small things, if ever thou desire to enjoy and be ruler over much.

The Lord may exercise thee in, and require of thee, little things; as He hath done the rest of the flock, whose footsteps thou art to follow to the Shepherd's tents; and the enemy will be endeavoring to stop thee, and perplex thee, in every little thing that the Lord requires of thee.

But be thou simple, like a child, not taking care what to answer wise professors, nor what to answer the reasoning of thy own mind; but, seeing thou hast felt the demonstration of Truth from God's Holy Spirit, O breathe unto the Lord to preserve thee in the innocency and simplicity thereof, that the Lord may still be with thee.

If thine eye be towards the Lord, He will uphold and strengthen thee, and bring thee

through all that stands in thy way; manifesting to thee, daily more and more, the path of holiness, in which the ransomed of the Lord walk, and enabling *thee* also to walk therein.

Therefore, watch the thoughts and reasonings which rise in thee, and retire from them, waiting to feel the Holy Spirit and to hear its voice in stillness.

3d or 4th of Tenth Month, 1668.

IX.

ON SIMPLICITY OF FAITH AND DEDICATION.

To John Mannock.

FRIEND:—It is a wonderful thing, to witness the power of God reaching to the heart, and demonstrating to the soul the pure way to life, as in His sight and presence.

Surely, he that partakes of this is therein favored by the Lord, and ought diligently to wait for the giving up to the leadings of His Holy Spirit in everything; that so he may travel through all that is contrary to the

Lord, into that nature and spirit which is of Him.

O Friend! hast thou a sense of the way to the Father? then, be careful that thy spirit daily bow before Him, and wait for breathings to Him from His pure Spirit, that He would continue His mercy to thee; keeping thee in the true sense, and making thy way more and more clear before thee every day.

Yea, and bearing thee up in all the exercises and trials which may befall thee, in every kind; that, by His secret working in thy spirit, and helping thee with a little help from time to time, thou mayest still be advancing nearer and nearer towards the Kingdom; until thou find the Lord God administer an entrance unto thee thereinto, and give thee an inheritance of life, joy, righteousness, and peace therein;—which is strength unto the soul against sin and death, and against the sorrow and trouble which ariseth in the mind, for want of God's presence and holy power revealed there.

And be not careful after the flesh, but trust the Lord. What though thou art weak, and

little; though thou meet with those that are wise and knowing, and almost every way able to reason thee down; what though thou hast not wherewith to answer; yet thou knowest and hast the feeling of God's pure Truth in spirit, with a desire to have the life of it brought forth in thee, and so, to witness the change and renewings which are by His power.

O dear heart! herein thou art accepted of the Lord, and here His tender love and care will be over thee, and His mercy will daily reach to thee.

Yea, thou shalt so feel the Lord to help His babe against the strength of the mighty, in the seasons of His good pleasure, as shall exceedingly turn to His praise; and so, thou shalt experience, that whom God preserves, all the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against.

Therefore, look not out at men, or at the words and wisdom of men; but, keep where thou hast felt the Lord visit thee, that He may visit thee yet again and again, every day, and be teaching thee further and further

the way to his dwelling-place, and be drawing thee thither, where is righteousness, life, rest, and peace, forever! This arose in my heart this morning, in tender love towards thee.

From thy Friend in the Truth, which cleanseth the heart from iniquity, as it is embraced and dwelt in. I. P.

23d of Tenth Month, 1668.

X.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

To Elizabeth Walmsley.

DEAR FRIEND, — Who art lovely to me in that precious life, wherewith the Lord hath visited thee, and wherein He hath brought thee forth for His service, and to His praise.

I find the spirits of Friends here much raised, who dwell in the fear and dread of the Lord God Almighty, where the fear and dread of man is removed far away.

The Lord preserve us near unto Himself, out of that which separates from Him and weakens; and nothing shall be able to interrupt our joy in the Lord, nor our delight and pleasure in His will.

Lo! I come, saith the child, to do Thy will, O God! to drink the cup Thou hast prepared; although there is a nature which cannot but say, If it be possible, let it pass away; but *that* nature is bowed down and subjected under its proper yoke, and, in submission, is kept out of sinning against the Lord.

Truly, the Lord hath done great things for us! He hath given us the sight and knowledge of Himself in His Son, which is life eternal; He hath given us of the nature and spirit of His Son; He hath given us of the true faith, whereby the just lives, and obtains victory over sin, death, and the grave; He hath given us of the hope which purifies the heart, and stays the mind in all storms; He hath given us of the Lamb's patience and meekness, etc.

And now, if He will brighten these by

afflictions, and try them, and cause them to shine to His glory; yea, and take advantage to increase them, and add further virtue to them, what cause have any of us to complain?

Israel, of old, after the flesh, murmured upon every trial; but Israel, after the new creation, doth not so, but blesseth the Lord, and repineth not at the instruments which He permitteth to afflict them; but they love the Lord and love His truth, and are faithful in their testimony thereto, whatever befalls them.

Yea, they rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer in any kind for His name's sake, and are like lambs before the shearers, not opening their mouths in a way of murmuring or reviling; but instead thereof, pitying them, praying for them, and blessing; because God hath made them children of love, children of peace, children of blessing; which nature they retain, in the midst of all their trials and afflictions, and show forth the virtues of Him that hath called them.

So that, men shall not put out our life, nor put out our light, nor sever us from the love and power of God; but, the more need we find of our God, and of His help and strength, the nearer shall we be driven to Him, and dwell more closely in union with Him, and in holy and humble dependence upon Him.

And, in this temper, shall we draw and receive more from Him; and the more we draw from Him, the better will it be with us, and the more like Him shall we be.

The Lord keep open that heavenly eye in His children and servants, which looks over this world, with the affairs and concerns thereof, to that which is immortal and invisible; where our life is hid from others, though made manifest in and felt by us, from the living spring which quickens, nourisheth, and refresheth.

My dear love is to Friends in these parts, (particularly M. O.;) the Lord preserve them and keep them near to Himself, that they may receive counsel and strength from Him according to their need.

I am sensible of thy great love to us, expressed in thy care and tenderness of our child, as well as in other things: I hope she is no burden to thee. O that she might feel and be guided by that which keeps in order all that are subject to it.

I remain thy Friend and brother, in the life and love which never dies nor changes.

I. P.

18th of Second Month, 1670.

XI.

ON FOLLOWING THE LEADINGS OF THE SPIRIT.

To Widow Hemmings.

DEAR FRIEND:—Since I last saw thee, there have been many deep and serious thoughts on my heart concerning thee; and a sense of thy state as before the Lord, and breathings of heart for thee.

I am sensible, that the Spirit of the Lord is striving with thee, and in some measure opening thy heart towards Him and His

truth; and I am sensible withal, that there is much striving against Him; and many strongholds of wisdom and reasonings in thee, which must be broken down, before Truth can spring up in thy heart, and exercise its power in thee, and have full command in thee.

Now, this morning, when I awoke, there were three things sprang up in me, which my heart did singly and earnestly desire for thee.

One was, that thou mightst be led by God's Holy Spirit into the new and living covenant, where Christ is revealed, and the soul united to Him as its Lord and King, in a bond of indissoluble union.

Another was, thou mightst daily be taught of God, and learn of Him, in this holy, new, pure, and everlasting covenant.

The third was, that thou mightst be true and faithful to God, to obey and follow Him in whatever He teaches and requires of thee.

If thou wert but in this state, thou wouldst find sweetness and rest, peace and power, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and life eternal, revealed in thy own heart,

and with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.

If thou come to know God's Spirit, and to receive it, and feel it work in thee, and its pure light shine from the fountain and spring of life, thou wilt have a quicker sense and discerning therefrom, than can arise either from words written, or from thoughts; that is, the Lord will show thee the way whereof thou doubtest, quicker than a thought can arise in thee; and the Lord will show thee evil, in a pure sense of the new nature, quicker than thou canst think or consider of anything.

Perhaps these words, at present, may be hard unto thee: but if thou come to wait on God's Holy Spirit, and to the feeling of His appearance in thy heart, and to learn of Him to know what is good and what is evil in thy words, ways, worship, yea, and in thy very heart and thoughts, and also to choose the good and refuse the evil; they will grow easier and easier, and plainer and plainer, daily, as thou comest into the sense and experience of the things they mention.

Mind not so much to *know*, as to be obe-

dient and subjected to the Lord, both in thy heart and in thy conversation also, in the least thing that he makes manifest.

The Lord lead thee as He seeth good, and give thee faithfully to follow; for else, if the Lord should lead in anything, and thou not follow in that thing, His Spirit would be grieved and vexed thereby, and thy heart in danger of being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

26th of Eighth Month, 1670.

XII.

THE LORD WILL DELIVER HIS OWN.

To Elizabeth Walmsley.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND: — Many are the trials, afflictions, and temptations, which the Lord seeth good to exercise us with, for the purifying and making us white, that He may honor His name in us and through us: but this promise stands sure, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

And, if our God be with us and for us, what can prevail against the work and design of His love and power towards us?

I am deeply sensible of thy condition, feeling it, even in the tender and melting love of my heart towards thee; and this word sprang in me to thee, Look not out, but trust in the Lord, who can make things easier than they seem likely to be; and will certainly carry *His* through the hardest things which He suffers to befall them.

O the Lord keep all in His pure innocency; out of the earthly contriving wisdom, which saith, Save thyself, avoid this dreadful brunt, this stroke of the cross; which it is easy to hearken to, if the mind be not kept to that eye and that wisdom, which discovers the tempter, and instructeth the bird to escape his snare.

XIII.

OF OBEDIENCE IN CONFESSING CHRIST.

To Elizabeth Stonar.

DEAR FRIEND:—I am sensible that the Lord hath visited thee with His power, reaching to thy heart in the demonstration of His own Spirit, and that thy heart hath answered, and said in the inward of thy soul, It is God's Truth indeed.

Now, so far as God hath reached to thee, so far it behooves thee to confess Him, His Truth, and people before men, and to give up in obedience and subjection of spirit to the Lord.

And, if thou say, in the simplicity of thy heart, to any that have any tenderness, Thus it is with me; I believe from my heart this or that is of God; what shall I do, shall I give up in obedience thereto, or shall I disobey the Lord, grieve his Spirit, and wound my own soul? This will reach that which is of

God in any; and this will wound and trouble that which is not of God.

The Lord guide thee, and pity thee, and help thee in thy straits, and doubts, and fears, and troubles, both in reference to thyself and mother.

Thy soul's true and sincere-hearted Friend,

I. P.

XIV.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITHFULNESS UNDER APPREHENSION OF SUFFERINGS.

To Widow Hemmings.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I have not forgotten thee: but have often inquired after thee, and many times breathed for thee.

O my Friend, look not *out* at what stands in the way; what if it look dreadfully as a lion, is not the Lord stronger than the mountains of prey? but look *in*, where the law of life is written, and the will of the Lord re-

vealed, that thou mayest know what is the Lord's will concerning thee.

Be not straitened in thy spirit, as fearing what thou shalt suffer for Christ's sake; or, as if God would not stand by thee, or carry thee through.

Be thy sufferings as great as possible, yet He is faithful, who hath promised thee an hundred-fold in this life.

Oh! what can hurt thee, if thy God stand by thee? Be faithful to his testimony in thy place, and He will stand by thee.

This was what was in my heart to thee, at present in true and tender love, and in melting desires for thee, that the Lord may guide and preserve thee, and give thee of the Lamb's courage and strength, who by meekness and sufferings is now to conquer.

What if the wicked nature, which is as a sea casting out mire and dirt, rage against thee? There is a river, a sweet, still, flowing river, the streams whereof will make glad thy heart.

And learn but in quietness and stillness to retire to the Lord, and wait upon Him; in

whom thou shalt find peace and joy, in the midst of thy trouble from the cruel and vexatious spirit of this world.

So, wait to know thy work and service to the Lord every day, in thy place and station; and the Lord make thee faithful therein, and thou wilt want neither help, support, nor comfort.

Thy Friend in the truest, sincerest, and most constant love. I. P.

London, 1st of Ninth Month, 1675.

XV.

COMFORT AND COUNSEL UNDER AFFLICTION.

To the Lady Conway.

DEAR FRIEND:—In tender love, and in a sense of thy sore afflictions and exercises, I do most dearly salute thee. Though sorrows, heaviness, and faintings of heart ever so much increase; yet, if thy faith increase also, it will bear thee up in the midst of them.

I would fain have it go well with thee, and that thou mightest not want the Reprover, in anything that is to be reproved in thee; nor the Comforter, in any respect wherein thy soul wants comfort; nor the holy Counsellor and Adviser, in any strait or difficulty which the wise and tender God orders to befall thee.

If the Lord, in thy waiting upon Him, to search and try thy heart and ways, shall please to show thee anything amiss therein; mind this counsel on my heart to thee.

Be not looking at it too much on the one hand, or excusing it, on the other hand; but sink down beneath thyself, retiring thither, where thou mayest receive from the Lord true judgment concerning it, and also strength against it.

And know this, in the holy experience; that thou must be weakened by the Lord, and be contented in or with thy weak and distressed estate, if thou wouldst receive mercy and strength from Him.

And the more thou art weakened and distressed, the more thou art fitted for, and the

more abundantly shalt thou partake of His mercy and strength; waiting upon Him in the meek, quiet, patient, and resigned spirit, which He will not fail to work thy mind into; that, in the issue of all, thou mayest reap the quiet fruits of righteousness and heavenly peace from His hand. Amen, so be it from the Lord to thy soul!

14th of Twelfth Month, 1678.

XVI.

ON THE BENEFIT OF CHASTENING BY AFFLICTIONS.

To the Lady Conway.

OH! the Lord guide thee daily, and keep thy mind to Him; at least, looking towards the holy place of the springing of His life and power in thy heart.

Look unto Him. Help, pity, salvation, will arise in His due time; but it will not arise from anything thou canst do or think;

and faith will spring and patience be given, and hope in the tender Father of mercy, and a meek and quiet spirit will be witnessed; and the Lamb's nature springing up and opening in thee, from His precious Spirit, which will excel in nature, kind, degree, and virtue, all the faith, patience, hope, meekness, etc., which thou, or any else, otherwise can attain unto.

Oh! look not at thy pain or sorrow, how great soever; but look from them, look off them, look beyond them, to the Deliverer! whose power is over them, and whose loving, wise, and tender Spirit is able to do thee good by them.

The Lord lead thee, day by day, in the right way, and keep thy mind stayed upon Him, in whatever befalls thee; that the belief of His love, and hope in His mercy, when thou art at the lowest ebb, may keep up thy head above the billows; and that thou mayest go on in the disciple's state, learning righteousness and holiness of Him, who teacheth to deny and put off unholiness and unrighteousness, and to know, embrace,

and put on newness of life, and the holiness and righteousness thereof.

The Lord God of my life be with thee, preserving and ordering thy heart for the great day of His love and mercy; which will come in the appointed season, when the heart is fully exercised and fitted by the Lord for it, and will not tarry.

XVII.

Counsel to One Tossed as with Tempests.

IT is the Lord's mercy, to give thee breathings after life, and cries unto Him against that which oppresseth thee; and happy wilt thou be, when He shall fill thy soul with that, which He hath given thee to breathe after.

Only, let thy heart wait for strength to trust Him with the season; for His long tarrying is thy salvation, and the destruction of those enemies, which, while any strength remains in them, will never suffer

thee and thy God to dwell uninterruptedly together.

Therefore, they must needs die, and He who hath the power to kill them, knows the way; which, to the appearing of the sense, will be as if He meant to kill the life of *thy soul*, and not of *them*.

But, lie still under His hand, and be content to be unable to judge concerning His ways and workings in thy heart; and thou shalt at times feel an inward leaven of life from His Holy Spirit, whereby He will change and transform thy spirit into His likeness, in some measure, for the present.

And, though it be quickly gone again, and the whole land so overspread with enemies, that there is no sight of redemption or the Redeemer left, but the soul in a worse condition than before; yet, be not troubled: for, if troubles abound, and there be tossing, and storms, and tempests, and no peace, nor any thing visible left to support; yet, be still, and sink beneath, till a secret hope stir, which will stay the heart in the midst of all these: until the Lord administer comfort, who knows

how and what relief to give to the weary traveller, that knows not where it is, nor which way to look, nor where to expect a path.

XVIII.

ENCOURAGEMENT UNDER TRIALS INCIDENT TO BEARING THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

I KNOW, dear heart, thy outward trials cannot but be sharp and bitter; and I know also that the Lord is able to sustain thee under them, and cause thee to stand thy ground.

O that thou couldst dwell in the knowledge and sense of this! even, that the Lord beholds thy sufferings with an eye of pity; and is able, not only to uphold thee under them, but also to do thee good by them; and to bring forth that life and wisdom in thee by means thereof, to which He will give dominion over that spirit which grieves and afflicts thee, in His due season.

Therefore, grieve not at thy lot, be not discontented, look not out at the hardness of thy condition; but, when the storms and matters of vexation are sharp, look up to Him who can give meekness and patience, can lift thy head over all, and be a gainer by all.

If the Lord God did not help us by His mighty arm, how often should we fall and perish! and if the Lord God help thee proportionably to thy condition of affliction and distress, thou wilt have no cause to complain, but to bless His name. He is exceedingly good, and gracious, and tender-hearted, and doth not despise the afflictions of the afflicted, for His name's sake, in any kind.

XIX.

MIND NOT TEMPTATIONS.

To Widow Hemmings.

O MY dear Friend! that nothing might come between thy soul and God's Truth; that thy comfort, peace, and joy, might be full, and that thou mightst lay down thy head quietly in the bosom of Him, who loves thee, and accepts the sincere desires of thy heart towards Him; as I have always told thee, and is still true concerning thee.

Mind not temptations nor accusations, nor the many noises the enemy will make in thee and against thee, to the Lord; but, wait to feel Truth and life springing in thy heart from the holy well, and to hear the still voice of the Spirit of the Lord; and He will testify His love to thee, and speak peace.

Wait to feel somewhat inwardly, wherein God appears, and breathes, and gathers, and receives — and eases of the loads, fears,

doubts, troubles, temptations, and accusations, etc.; and the Lord God of my life and tender mercies, which He hath made sure to my soul in the everlasting covenant, give thee solid peace and consolation in the Son of His love, through the measure of His grace and Truth springing in thy heart, and staying thy mind upon Him.

XX.

TRUST THE LORD WHEN DISTRESSED.

To Bridget Atley.

THOU must not look so much at the evil which is nigh, but rather at that, which stands ready to pity and help,—and which hath pitied and helped thy distressed soul, and will pity and help it again. Why is there a mercy-seat, but for the sinner to look towards in time of need?

Be patient, till the Lord's tender mercy and love visit thee again; and then, look up

to Him against this and such like snares, which would come between thee and the appearance of the Lord's love; that thou mayest feel more of His abidings with thee, and of the sweet effects thereof.

For, these things are not to destroy thee, but to teach thee wisdom; which the Lord is able, through many exercises and sore trials, to bestow upon thee; which my soul will exceedingly rejoice to hear the tidings of; that thy heart may be rid of all that burdeneth, and filled with all it rightly desires after, in the proper season and goodness of the Lord: to whose wise ordering and tender mercy I commit thee, remaining, Thy faithful Friend.

I. P.

XXI.

ON SHUNNING THE CROSS.

To Catherine Pordage.

AH! my poor, distressed, entangled Friend, while thou seekest to avoid the snare, thou deeply runnest into it; for thou art feeding on the tree of knowledge, in giving way to these thoughts, reasonings, and suggestions, which keep thee from obedience to that, which hath been made manifest to thy understanding.

And thou mayest well be feeble in thy mind, while thou art thus separated from Him who is thy strength, and lettest in His enemy. This is not the right feebleness of mind which God pities, nor the right way of waiting to receive strength.

Why shouldst not thou act, so far as God gives thee light? And why shouldst thou not appear willing to obey Him, even in lit-

tle things, so far as He hath given thee light?

What if I should say, that all this is but the subtlety of the serpent's wisdom to avoid the cross, and is not that simplicity and plainness of heart towards God, which thou takest it to be; and that thou art loath to be so poor, and low, and mean in the eyes of others, as this practice would make thee appear?

Thy Friend in the Truth, and in sincere love, I. P.

Amersham, 25th of Ninth Month, 1675.

XXII.

ON LOVE, MEEKNESS, AND WATCHING OVER EACH OTHER.

To Friends in Amersham.

FRIENDS:—Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another, but

praying one for another, and helping one another with a tender hand, if there has been any slip or fall; and waiting till the Lord gives sense and repentance, if sense and repentance in any be wanting.

Oh! wait to feel this spirit, and to be guided to walk in this spirit, that ye may enjoy the Lord in sweetness, and walk sweetly, meekly, tenderly, peaceably, and lovingly, one with another.

Then ye will be a praise to the Lord, and anything that is, or hath been, or may be amiss, ye will come over in the true dominion, even in the Lamb's dominion; and that which is contrary shall be trampled upon, as life rises and rules in you.

So watch your hearts and ways; and watch one over another in that which is gentle and tender, and knows it can neither preserve itself, nor help another out of the snare; but the Lord must be waited upon to do this in and for us all.

So, mind Truth, the service, enjoyment, and possession of it in your hearts; and so to walk as ye may bring no disgrace upon it, but

may be a good savor in the places where ye live—the meek, innocent, tender, righteous life reigning in you, governing over you, and shining through you, in the eyes of all with whom ye converse.

Your friend in the Truth, and a desirer of your welfare and prosperity therein.

I. P.

Aylesbury, 4th Third Month, 1667.

XXIII.

TO ONE UNDER DIVINE VISITATION.

O DEAR FRIEND! — The eternal love of my Father is to thee; and, because He loves thee, and would entirely enjoy thee, therefore doth He so grievously batter and break down that which stands in the way.

What He is doing towards thee, thou canst not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Only be still, and wait for the springing up of hope, in the seasons the Father sees nec-

essary; that thou mayest not faint under His hand, but be supported by His secret power, until His work be finished.

The great thing necessary for thee at present to know, is, the drawings of His Spirit; that thou mayest not ignorantly withstand or neglect them, and protract the day of thy redemption.

Oh! look not after great things:—small breathings, small desires after the Lord, if true and pure, are sweet beginnings of life.

Take heed of despising "the day of small things," by looking after some great visitation, proportionable to this distress, according to thy eye. Nay, thou must become a child, thou must lose thy own will quite by degrees.

Thou must wait for life to be measured out by the Father, and be content with what proportion, and at what time, He shall please to measure.

Oh! be little, be little; and then, thou wilt be content with little; and if thou feel, now and then, a check or a secret smiting, in *that* is the Father's love; be not over-

wise, nor over-eager, in thy own willing, running, and desiring, and thou mayest feel it so; and by degrees come to the knowledge of thy Guide, who will lead thee, step by step, in the path of life, and teach thee to follow, and, in His own season, powerfully judge that which cannot, nor will not follow.

Be still, and wait for light and strength; and desire not to know or comprehend, but to be known and comprehended in the love and life, which seeks out, gathers, and preserves the lost sheep.

I remain thy dear Friend, and a well-wisher of thy soul, in the love of my Father.

I. P.

XXIV.

TO WAIT FOR THE SPIRIT.

OH! WAIT to know that wherein the Lord inwardly appears, and take up the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to everything that is contrary to God; that it all

may be crucified in thee, that thy soul may live in the abundance of life and peace.

And, be not discouraged because of any weakness, or because of thy age. What knowest thou, what the Lord will do for thee? Thy weakness is not thy disadvantage, but advantage; for the weaker thou art in thyself, the fitter art thou to have Christ's power revealed and manifested in thee.

The Lord appear to thee, in the light and demonstration of His Spirit in thy heart and conscience,—touch thee, quicken thee, lead thee,—guide and make thee sensible of every appearance of His; that no motion or drawing of His Spirit may be quenched in thee, nor any motion of the contrary spirit, under any deceivableness, hearkened to; that thou mayest travel faithfully, and come to the end of thy travels with joy and full peace, reaping the sheaves in life everlasting, of all that thou hast sown to the Spirit.

This is the earnest and single desire of my soul for thee, who am thy true and faithful Friend, and a hearty well-wisher to thee and thine. I. P.

XXV.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOOK UP TO THE LORD.

FRIEND:—Thy advantage in thy travels is great over what it hath been; the Lord having given thee a better sight both of thy enemies, and of that wherein His strength against them is revealed.

Now what remains? but that thou hope in Him, and breathe unto Him, and hang upon Him; that His virtue may flow into thee; and the mountains and difficulties may pass away, before the presence of Him who is revealed in thee.

Look down no more, look out no more; but, dwell with thy Beloved, in the tent that He hath pitched for thee.

Think not hardly of Him, by no means; question not His carrying on of His work. O feel His arm stretched out for thee! and be not so much discouraged, in the sight of what is yet to be done, as comforted in His good-will towards thee.

'Tis true, He hath chastened thee with rods and sore afflictions; but, did He ever take away His loving kindness from thee? or did His faithfulness ever fail in the sorest, blackest, thickest, darkest night that ever befell thee?

And breathe to Him, for the carrying on of his work; that thou mayest feel His presence and life, getting dominion over death daily in thee, more and more.

Oh! how sweet will it be for thee, who hast so often been ensnared, to escape the gins and nets of the fowler, and to dwell in the rest and peace, which thy soul hath tasted of, and which is the proper place of thy habitation.

Indeed, the Lord's thoughts have not been towards thee, as thou hast apprehended all along. His anger was towards the enemy, towards the oppressor, not towards thee.

Nor doth He judge and smite the mind, after that manner that the enemy doth accuse; but according to His own nature, sweetness, and tender love. And His judgments and smitings have other effects than the

serpent's accusings and piercings; for *they* do not drive *from* Him, but they melt, and tender and prepare the heart for union with Him.

Oh! keep close to the measure of life, wherein thou mayest discern and distinguish these things; and take heed of letting in one bowing-down thought (how manifest or demonstrative soever,) but look up to Him who hath freely loved, and hath abounded in mercy towards thee; that, in the faith, patience, stillness, and meekness of His spirit, thou mayest be found always waiting upon Him, in the several exercises, wherewith he shall daily see good to exercise thee.

9th of Eighth Month, 1666.

XXVI.

ON UNRESERVED OBEDIENCE.

To Bridget Atley.

DEAR FRIEND:—I know thy soul desires to live; and my soul desireth, that thou mightst live. Oh! why art thou so backward to hearken to the voice which is nigh thee, wherein is life? Why dost thou reason? Why dost thou consult? Why dost thou expect? Why dost thou hope? Why dost thou believe against thy own soul?

And do not look for such great matters to begin with; but, be content to be a child, and let the Father proportion out daily to thee what light, what power, what exercises, what straits, what fears, what troubles, He sees fit for thee; and do thou bow before Him continually, in humility of heart, who hath the disposal of thee, whether to life or death forever.

Oh! that thy soul may spring up to know,

serve, and worship the Lord, and to wait daily to be formed by Him, until thou become perfectly like Him.

But thou must join in with the beginnings of life, and be exercised with the day of small things, before thou meet with the great things, wherein is the clearness and satisfaction of the soul.

The rest is at noon-day; but the travels begin at the breakings of day, wherein are but glimmerings, or little light, wherein the discovery of good and evil are not so manifest and certain; yet, *there* must the traveller begin and travel; and in his faithful travels, (in much fear and trembling lest he should err,) the light will break in upon him more and more. 1665.

XXVII.

AFFLICTIONS MAY WORK OUT A WEIGHT OF GLORY.

To my dear suffering Friends in Scotland.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, none look out, either at outward or inward sufferings; but to the Lord only, whose life, Spirit, and power is above them, and bears up all over them, who are in spirit joined to Him, faithfully waiting upon Him; which God daily teaches and enables His to do.

Thus, my dear Friends, feel the Lord's presence and power among you, who is always near His, but especially in the time of their straits, trials, and sufferings; and wait to feel the life springing, and doing its proper work in each of you day by day; working out what is to be wrought out in any, and working more and more into the glory of the heavenly image; that, through the sufferings, ye may come into the glory, and be crowned

with the glory, virtue, holiness, righteousness, and dominion of life over all.

So, my dear Friends, be strong in the Lord, with the strength of the Lord, with which He is clothing those whom He hath emptied and made weak; for the trials, temptations, and afflictions, prepare for, and (as I may say) lead into the possession of the desired inheritance; where all that the soul hath breathed and waited for is bestowed upon it, by the bountiful hand of the Father of mercies, who keeps covenant and mercy forever, and renews covenant and mercy day by day.

So, the tender God of my life, and the Father of the blessings and mercies of my once greatly distressed and miserable soul, instruct you, preserve you, watch over you; exercise your spirits most advantageously, and daily open you to Himself.

Be of good faith, my dear Friends, look not out at anything; fear none of those things ye may be exposed to suffer, either outwardly or inwardly; but trust the Lord over all, and your life will spring, and grow,

and refresh you, and the love and power will purge out, and keep out, what would hinder its growth; and ye will learn obedience and faithfulness daily more and more, even by your exercises and sufferings; the wisdom, power, love, and goodness of the Lord, ordering *every* thing for you, and ordering *your* hearts in every thing.

London, 5th of Fifth Month, 1676.

XXVIII.

AGAINST EARTHLY REASONINGS AND EXPECTATIONS.

To Sarah Bond.

DEAR SARAH:—I have had many thoughts of thee in my imprisonment; wherein, I have seen in spirit thy error and miscarriage, and a hope and expectation in thy heart, which will deceive thee.

O how much precious time hast thou lost! wherein thou mightst have been travelling far

on thy journey, while thou art disputing in thy mind, and wandering in the deceitful reasonings of thy heart.

And indeed, it must not be, it must not be as thou imaginest; but, thou must begin low, and be glad of a little light to travel with out of the earthly nature, and be faithful thereunto; and in faithfulness expect additions of light, and so much power as may help thee to rub on.

And though thou may be long low, and weak, and little, and ready to perish; yet, in the humble and self-denying state, the Father will help thee, and cause His life to shoot up in thee, in the shooting up whereof will be thy redemption.

Mind that which checks in thy heart; mind also that which reasons against those checks, to hold thee still in captivity, and to keep thee from travelling out of the earthly nature, spirit, wisdom, and practices; and come out of the spirit and way of this world, that thou mayest live, and not die. For, none shall live, but those that walk in the way of

life, and leave the paths and course of the dead, in which thou art yet entangled.

Oh! that thou mightst be loosed, and travel out thence, with a little light and a little help; and not limit the Holy One of Israel in thy desires or expectations, but thankfully receive the smallest visitation that comes from Him to thy soul; for, there is life and peace in it, and death and perplexity in turning from it.

And *this* will not be thy comfort or satisfaction hereafter, to have had a day of visitation and mercy from on high; but to have received the visitation, and to have been turned in it from the darkness of the earthly mind and nature, into the light of the living and redeemed souls,—this will be comfortable, indeed!

And this is my tender counsel to thee: wait for, and *gaspingly* receive the checks of the Most High, and take heed of reasoning against them; but, as that, (though in a low, and mean, and despicable way to thy wisdom,) draws and leads thee out of any earthly thought, word, custom, or practice,

follow diligently; not reasoning against it, but, waiting to have thy reasonings subdued to the smallest motions, and lowest guidance of life in thee.

For, I certainly know, the light manifests in thee; but, the darkness puts off the present manifestation of the light, and expects another; and this is in the will of the flesh, which the Father will not answer; and *in this* will and expectation, thou wilt perish; but thy help, life, and salvation is, in being subject to the present manifestation of light, parting with, and departing from, what thou already knowest to be of the earth, and not of God.

And, in thus doing, more will be made manifest in the Lord's season, and power given to become a child, after some belief in the Father, and some entrance into the child-like nature.

I am thy Friend, and a dear lover of *that* in thee, which desires the Lord; and O that *that* might come up in thee, and be severed from *the earth*, that thy soul may live.

XXIX.

CONSOLATION FOR A MOTHER ON THE DEATH OF HER CHILD.

To Sarah Elgar.

THE child, which the Lord hath taken from thee, was His own. He hath done thee no wrong, in calling it from thee. Take heed of murmuring, take heed of discontent, take heed of any grief, but what Truth allows thee. Thou hast yet one child left. The Lord may call for that too, if He pleases; or He may continue and bless it to thee.

Oh! mind a right frame of spirit towards the Lord, in this thy great affliction! If thou mind God's Truth in thy heart, and wait to feel the seasoning thereof, that will bring thee into, and preserve thee in a right frame of spirit.

The Lord will not condemn thy love and tenderness to thy child, or thy tender remem-

brance of him ; but still, in it, be subject to the Lord, and let His will and disposal be bowed unto by thee, and not the will of thy nature set above it.

Retire out of the natural into the spiritual, where thou mayest feel the Lord thy portion ; so that now, in the needful time, thou mayest day by day receive and enjoy satisfaction therein. Oh ! wait to feel the Lord making thy heart what He would have it to be, in this thy deep and sore affliction. I. P.

Nunnington, Sixth Month, 1679.

Now let the world see how thou prizest Truth, and what Truth can do for thee. Feed on it ; do not feed on thy affliction ; and the life of Truth will arise in thee, and raise thee up over it, to the honor of the name of the Lord, and to the comfort of thy own soul.

XXX.

ADVICE RESPECTING CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

To the Women's Meeting of Friends in the Truth at John Mannock's.

OH! wait and watch, to feel your Keeper keeping you within the holy bounds and limits, within the pure fear, within the living sense, while ye are acting for your God, that ye may be only His instruments, and feel Him acting in you.

Let the holy rule of the blessed apostle James, be always upon your spirits, "Let every one be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Oh! let not a talkativeness have place in any of you, but abide in such gravity, modesty, and weightiness of spirit, as becomes the judgment-seat of the Spirit and power of the Lord. Ye can never wait too much for the power, nor can ye ever act too much in the power; but ye may easily act too much without it.

And as for this troublesome, contentious business, (if the Lord should yet order it to be brought before you,) the Lord teach you to consider of, and manage it in a wise, tender, and healing spirit.

Ye must distinguish in judgment, if ye judge aright, between enemies and erring friends. Are they in a snare? Are they overtaken in a fault? yea, are they in measure blinded and hardened, so that they can neither see nor feel, as to this particular?

Retire, sit still awhile, and travail for them. Feel how life will arise in any of you, and how mercy will reach towards them; and how living words, from the tender sense, may be reached forth to their hearts, deeply, by the hand of the Lord, for their good.

And, if ye find them, at length, bowing to the Lord, Oh! let tender compassion help them forwards; that what hath been so troublesome and groundedly dissatisfactory in the progress, may, at length, have a sweet issue for their good, and joy and rejoicing in the Lord.

19th of Fifth Month, 1678.

XXXI.

OF PRESERVATION AND GROWTH IN THE HEAVENLY LIFE.

To the Single, Upright-hearted and Faithful Friends of Truth, in and about the two Chalfonts.

THEN the soul lies down in peace, dwells in peace, feeds on the living nourishment, in the green pastures of life, in peace. Then Jerusalem, the building of life in the heart, becomes a quiet habitation, where God and the soul dwell sweetly together; and there is nothing that hath power in it to disturb, annoy, or make afraid.

Why so? Because the Lord God of power is present there, stretcheth out His wings there, is a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night there.

He hath raised up His glorious life in that heart, whereof He is very choice; and He

hath also spread a defence over His glory, with which the soul is so encompassed and defended, that it feels the walls of this city to be salvation, and its gates praise.

Oh! cry to the Lord, to keep the eye open, and the heart single, and the soul in the true sense and feeling; that the heavenly voice, which drew you out of the earth, may be daily heard further instructing you, and gathering you more and more up into Him, who is your life.

So, ye that fear the Lord, and love His name, and have tasted of His goodness and powerful salvation, Oh! hate evil! All that His light hath made manifest, and drawn you from, Oh! take heed of ever dallying with again. Still wait, in everything, to feel the motion, guidance, quickening, and sweet, pure, heavenly leading of the Spirit of your Father!

Hath the Lord spoken peace to you, peace which passeth man's understanding, and only flows from Him? hath He given you any proportion of this precious peace? Oh! may He watch over you, and preserve you in that wis-

dom, in those heavenly instructions, in that heavenly life, divine power, and holy conversation, wherein ye met with that peace, and wherein alone ye can enjoy and possess it; and keep you out of all manner of sin, lust, and foolishness of the fleshly mind and spirit;—for the peace is not there.

XXXII.

COMFORT FROM THE COMFORTER.

To the Lady Conway.

DEAR FRIEND:—I have heard both of thy love to Truth, and of thy great afflictions outwardly; both which occasion a sense concerning thee, and breathings to the tender Father of my life for thee: that thy heart may know and be joined to the Truth, and thou mayest live and walk in it, reaping the sweet comfort, support, and satisfaction, which God daily ministers in and through it, to His gathered and preserved ones.

I am satisfied thou hast need of comforts and support; Oh! that thou mayest be led thither, and be daily found by the Lord there, where the Comforter doth daily delight to supply the afflicted and suffering ones, whether inwardly or outwardly, with comfort.

XXXIII.

THE LOVING-KINDNESS OF THE LORD.

To Elizabeth Walmsley, of Giles Chalfont.

DEAR FRIEND:—The thoughts of thee are pleasant to me; indeed, I am melted with the sense of the Lord's love to thee, as to my own soul.

What were we, that the Lord should stretch forth His arm to us, and gather us? And what are we, that the Lord should daily remember us, in the issuings forth of His loving-kindness and mercies? O His pity, His compassion! — must I forever say, — that my soul yet lives, and hath hope before Him? And canst thou not also say the same?

O my Friend! we feel mercy and salvation from the Lord. O that He might have pure praise and service from His own in us! and yet, that will be little thanks to us, but rather a new mercy received from Him. But, all is His own, and of His own do we give Him,—and that only when He quickens, helps, and enables us to give.

Dear Friend, my desire for thee is, that the power and blessings of life may descend upon thee, and that thou mayest feel thy God near, and thy heart still ready to let Him in, and shut against all that is of a contrary nature to His; that thou mayest know *that* death passing upon thee, and perfected in thee, which prepares for, and lets into, the fulness of His pure, unspotted life.

Aylesbury, 20th of Fourth Month, 1666.

XXXIV.

SCRIPTURE ADMONITIONS.

To Elizabeth Stonar.

I WOULD fain have thee rightly understand, and be found doing, what the Lord requires of thee; that it may go well with thee, and that thy heart may be satisfied, and thy soul blessed, in believing and obeying the Truth as it is in Jesus.

The first thing that rose up in my heart concerning thee, this morning, was, about confessing Christ before men. It is a great duty, and I would not have thee mistake about it, or fail in it; but diligently wait on God to know what it is, and faithfully to practise it in thy state and place; which, if thou do, thou wilt find life and blessedness flowing with it upon thy soul.

After this, several Scriptures, sweet and precious to my taste, sprang up in my heart

to lay before thy view; that thou also mightst suck sweetness, and reap benefit through the living sense of them, and the bowing of thy spirit to what the Lord shall please to make manifest to thee thereby.

The first Scripture that sprang up in me to thee, was that of Romans xii., 2, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of thy mind, that thou mayest prove that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God.

The next Scripture in my heart, was Rev. ii., 10, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." Upon which Scripture, this question arose in my heart to thee, Dost not thou fear the sufferings which may attend thee, in thy state and place, for Truth's sake? Dost thou not look out at them? If thou do, it will weaken thy faith, and be a snare to thee; and such a beam in thy eye, that thou wilt never be able to see that particular way and path of Truth, which is most proper for thy soul, till this beam be plucked out and separated from thee.

Unto this, was soon added that of Isa-

iah li., 12, 13, "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?"

Oh! take heed of distrusting the Comforter, *thy* Comforter! who is able and ready to help and comfort the souls of His, in the sorest distresses and oppressions that can befall them, either within or without.

And, consider this also, that forgetting the Lord is the necessary consequence of fearing man. It cannot be but that he that feareth man should in some measure or degree forget the Lord,—His love, His wisdom, His power, His goodness, His faithfulness, and tender care over His children in their following Him,—especially in the midst of the cruel hardships and sufferings which often befall them therein.

Then that of Luke ix., 23, 24, came before me, (which is said to all that hear Christ's voice and blessed counsel,) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For, whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

Now, I beseech thee, consider; dost thou take up the daily cross, and bear it faithfully for Christ's sake? Dost thou stand a faithful witness against the spirit of darkness, and works of darkness, where thou livest? Oh! take heed of shunning the cross in any respect.

Zion and her converts must be redeemed with judgment and righteousness, and with the spirit of burning, and the pain of the cross; nor dost thou know, how thou standest in the way of thy own soul's good, while thou in any measure avoidest or escapest it.

And if thou be one of the called, chosen, and faithful, following fully after the Lord in the same Spirit, and power, and banner of the cross, under which His called, chosen, and

faithful ones have followed Him; He will lead thee into the same land of life, rest, peace, and holy dominion over sin and Satan, into which he hath led those, who have faithfully followed the Lamb, whithersoever He hath pleased to go before, and lead them.

So, thou must wait to have thy heart daily more and more opened, and guided purely, and livingly, and sensibly by the Lord, into what He hath led His children, servants, family, and redeemed heritage.

Amersham, Bury End.
20th of First Month, 1675.

XXXV.

BE NOT DISCOURAGED.

To Friends of both the Chalfonts.

FRIENDS:—Be not discouraged because of your soul's enemies. Are ye troubled with thoughts, fears, doubts, imaginations, reasonings, etc.? Yea, do ye see, yet, much

in you unsubdued to the power of life? Oh! do not fear it; do not look at it, so as to be discouraged by it; but look to Him! look up to the power which is over all their strength; wait for the descendings of the power upon you; abide in faith of the Lord's help, and wait in patience till the Lord arise; and see if His arm do not scatter what yours could not.

So, be still before Him, and, in stillness, believe in His name; yea, enter not into the hurryings of the enemy, though they fill the soul; for, there is yet somewhat to which they cannot enter, from whence patience, faith and hope will spring up in you, even in the midst of all that they can do.

Now, Friends, in a sensible waiting and giving up to the Lord, in the daily exercise, by the daily cross to that in you which is not of the life, this work will daily go on; and ye will feel, from the Lord, that which will help, relieve, refresh, and satisfy, which neither tongues nor words can utter.

And then, as to what may befall us outwardly, in this confused state of things, shall

we not trust our tender Father, and rest satisfied in His will? Are we not engraven in His heart, and on the palms of His hands, and can he forget us in anything He doth? Shall anything hurt us? Shall anything come between us and our life, between us and His love, and tender care over us?

What, though the fig-tree should not blossom, neither there be any fruit in the vine; what, though the labor of the olive should fail, and the fields yield no meat; what, though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls; may we not for all this, rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation?

And what, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; what, though the waters roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; is there not a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God? Is not the joy, the virtue, the life, the sweet refreshment thereof, felt in the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High?

And He that provides inward food for the

inward man, inward clothing, inward refreshment; shall He not provide also sufficient for the outward? Yea, shall He not bear up the mind, and be our strength, portion, armor, rock, peace, joy, and full satisfaction, in every condition?

For, it is not the condition makes miserable, but the want of Him in the condition. He nourisheth, He preserveth, He upholdeth, with the creatures or without the creatures, as it pleaseth Him; and he that hath Him, he that is with Him, he that is in Him cannot want.

Hath the spirit of this world content in all that it enjoys? No: it is restless, it is unsatisfied. But can tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, come between the love of the Father to the child, or the child's rest, content, and delight in His love? And doth not the love, the peace, the rest, the joy felt, swallow up all the bitterness and sorrow of the outward condition?

The just lives by his faith; and he that is in union with the just, lives by the faith of

the just, and takes no more care than the lilies, but leaves the care of all to Him to whom it properly belongs, and who hath taken it upon Him; who nourishes, clothes, preserves, and causes the lilies of the field to grow and flourish in beauty and glory: and shall He not much more clothe, nourish, and take care of His own lilies, the heavenly lilies, the lilies of His garden?

Thus, my dear Friends, let us retire, and dwell in the peace which God breathes, and lie down in the Lamb's patience, and stillness, night and day, which nothing can wear out or disturb.

XXXVI.

THE SILENCE OF THE HEART.

To Widow Hemmings.

IF the Lord have begun to put a stop to the workings of flesh in thee, and thou be subject to Him therein, and cease from

thy own willings and workings, and wait on Him to be taught to perform things aright,—this is His love to thee; and, if thou come to feel the leadings of His Spirit further, and follow Him, thou wilt have cause to bless His name, as many others have, whom in this day He hath thus led.

Indeed, flesh should be silent before Him. Alas! what room is there for His Spirit and power, when there is such a multitude of thoughts, and workings, and reasonings, such a noise of flesh in many hearts and spirits?

Happy is he, who feels flesh silent, who comes to an end of his own willing and running, though that is a time of great distress, when the full mind is emptied and brought low; but then, He that shows mercy is near, and the day of mercy is not far off to that soul.

The Lord raise up that in thee, which is of Him; and so guide and order thy heart, that it may long and cry after Him, and be heard and satisfied by Him.

28th of Ninth Month, 1670.

XXXVII.

ON THE RELIGIOUS CARE OF CHILDREN.

To a Parent.

DEAR FRIEND:—I have not much freedom to write at present, being retired in spirit and mourning to my God, for the powerful bringing forth of His pure life, yet more perfectly, both in myself and others; yet the spirit of thy letter doth so strongly draw, that I cannot be wholly silent.

There is a pure principle of life in the heart, from whence all good springs. This thou art to mind in thyself; and this thou art to wait on the Lord to be taught and enabled by Him to reach to, in thy children; that thou mayest be an instrument in His hand, to bring them into that fear of Him, which is acceptable to Him, and will be profitable to them. Mind, therefore, its leadings in thy heart, and wait to be acquainted with its voice there.

And, when thy children ask thee any questions of this nature,—What God is? where He dwells? or whether He sees them in the dark?—do not reject it; but, wait to feel somewhat of God raised in thee, which is able to judge, whether the question be put forth in sensibility or in vanity; and which can give thee an advantage of stirring the good, and reaching to that, which is to be raised both in young and old, to live to the praise of Him who raiseth it.

And, as to thy children, daily feel the need of instruction from the Almighty, to govern and direct them, and wait daily to receive it from Him; and what thou receivest, give forth in fear, and wait for His carrying it home and working it upon their hearts. For He is a Father, and hath tenderness, and gives true wisdom to every condition of His people, that wait upon Him.

Breathe unto the Lord, that thy heart may be single, thy judgment set straight by His principle of life in thee, and thy children guided to, and brought up in the sense of the same principle.

20th of Third Month, 1665.

XXXVIII.

ISAAC PENINGTON, ON BEHALF OF HIMSELF AND HIS FRIENDS, TO THE MAGISTRATES WHO WERE STRIVING TO CRUSH OUT QUAKERISM BY PERSECUTION.

WHY do ye persecute and afflict a man who desireth to live in the love and peace of God towards you? Will nothing satisfy you unless I deny the Lord whom I have sought and been acquainted with from my childhood, and whose favor and presence I cannot but value above all things?

God appeareth not in outward shapes or voices, but in His Truth revealed in the hearts and consciences of them that fear Him and wait upon Him; and he that denieth subjection to any manifestation in the pure light revealed there denieth God, and shall be denied of Him; this I dare not run the hazard of, through fear of any man.

Ye are men—great men, many of you,—but I know God to be greater, and that His

power and authority over me is greater than yours; and therefore I am not to be blamed for yielding subjection to Him in the first place.

Oh! think what ye are doing. Oh! that ye would yet consider. Can poor worm man contend against his Maker, and prosper? Alas! what are we? But if the Lord our God hath appeared to us and in us, and ye in that respect are offended, and make war with us, do ye not thus contend against God? What will be the end of these things? and what are ye bringing this poor nation and yourselves unto?

For of a truth God is righteous, and what ye have sown in the day of your power that ye must reap in the day of his righteous judgment; all the sufferings, oppressions, and cries of the innocent will then come upon you in full weight and measure, unless ye repent and change your ways.

I write this in love, tenderness, and goodwill, as the Lord knoweth, however ye may interpret it; and after all my sufferings from you, I could freely lay down my life for your

sakes, if it were the will of God thus to do you good.

Aylesbury, 23d of Fourth Month, 1666.

XXXIX.

A REMONSTRANCE.

To the Earl of Bridgewater.

FRIEND:—It is the desire of my heart to walk with God, in the true fear of His name, and in true love and good-will to all men, all my days here upon the earth.

For this end, I wait upon God night and day, to know His will, and to receive certain instruction from Him, concerning what is acceptable in His sight. After He hath in anything made manifest His pleasure, I wait upon Him for strength to perform it; and when He hath wrought it by me, my soul blesseth Him therefore.

If this be a right course, I am not to be condemned herein; if it be not, and thou

knowest better, show me, in love, meekness, and tenderness; as I would be willing to make anything known to thee, for thy good, which the Lord hath shown me.

But this I am fully assured of, that God is higher than man: and that His will and laws are to be set up, and obeyed, in the first place; and man's only in the second, and in their due subordination to the will and laws of God.

Now, Friend, apply thyself to do that which is right and noble, and that which is truly justifiable in God's sight; that thou mayest give a comfortable account to Him, when He shall call thereunto.

That which thou hast done to me, hath not made me thy enemy; but, in the midst of the sense of it, I desire thy welfare, and that thou mayest so carry thyself in thy place, and actions, as that thou mayest neither provoke God against thee in this world, nor in the world to come.

Hast thou not yet afflicted me enough, without cause? Wouldst thou have me bow to thee therein, wherein the Lord hath not

given me liberty? If I should give thee outward titles and honors, might I not do thee hurt? O come down, be low in thy spirit before the Lord; honor Him in thy heart and ways, and wait for the true nobility and honor from Him.

Thou hast but a time to be in the world, and then eternity begins; and what thou hast sown here, thou must then reap. Oh! that thou mightst sow, not to thy own will and wisdom, but to God's Spirit; and know His guidance, who is only able to lead man aright.

I have sent thee this enclosed, in love. Read it in fear and humility, lifting up thy heart to the Lord, who giveth understanding, that it may be a blessing to thee; for in true love was it written, and is of a healing and guiding nature.

I have formerly written to thee; but my way hath been so barred up, that I have not found access easy; and how or whether this will come to thy hand, I know not; but, this I truly say to thee, I have felt the Lamb's patience, under my sufferings from thee, whereunto I have given thee no provocation,

neither for the beginning nor continuance of them; and if thou canst, bring that thing to the trial of the witness of God in thy heart, that will deal truly with thee, blaming what God blames, and justifying what He justifieth.

And though the Lord beholdeth, and will plead the cause of His innocent ones, (who the more helpless they are, the more they are considered and tendered by Him,) yet I do not desire that thou shouldst suffer, either from God or man, on my account; but that thou mightst be guided to, and preserved in, that which will be sweet rest, peace, and safety, to all that are sheltered by it, in the troublous and stormy hour; in which the Lord will distress man, and make him feel his sin and misery.

This is the sum of what I have at present to say; who have written this, not for any by-end, but in the stirrings of true love towards thee; and from a true desire, that thou mightst feel the power of God forming in thy heart aright and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness in thee;—that thou mightst

be made by Him of the seed of the blessed, and inherit the blessing, and find the earthly nature consumed, and brought to naught in thee.

I am thy Friend in these things, and have written as a true lover and desirer of the welfare of thy soul.

From Aylesbury Gaol.

24th of Sixth Month, 1666.

XL.

To His Wife.

MY DEAR TRUE LOVE:—I have hardly freedom to take notice of what hath passed so much as in my own thoughts; but I am satisfied in my very heart that the Lord, who is good, hath ordered things thus, and will bring about what He pleaseth thereby. Why should the fleshly-wise, reasoning part murmur, or find fault?

Oh! be silent before the Lord all flesh within me, and disturb not my soul in wait-

ing on my God for to perceive what He is working in me and for me, and which He maketh these uncouth occurrences conduce into.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, even that I may be His, perfectly disposed of by Him, know nothing but Him, enjoy nothing but in His life and leadings. Thus must I give up and part with even thee, my most dear and worthy love, or I cannot be happy in my own soul or enjoy thee as I desire.

I find my heart deeply desiring and breathing after the pure power of the Lord to reign in me; yet dare I not choose, but beg to be taught to wait; and to be made willing to drink the residue of the cup of suffering, both inward and outward, until the Lord see good to take it from my lips.

Oh, my dear! say little concerning me; plead not my cause, but be still in thy own spirit, and await what the Lord will do for me; that all the prayers which in the tenderness of my soul I have often put up for thee may have their full effect upon thee. My dear, be my true yoke-fellow, helpful to draw

my heart toward the Lord, and from everything but what is sanctified by the presence and leadings of His life. I feel and thou knowest that I am, very dearly thine.

1st of 7th Month, 1665. I. P.

[Written soon after the beginning of his unjust confinement in Aylesbury Gaol.]

XLI.

To his Wife.

MY DEAR LOVE, whom my heart is still with, and whose happiness and full content is my great desire and delight.

Leaving thee in so doubtful a condition, and there being such an earnestness in my mind to hear how it was with thee, it was pretty hard to me to miss of a letter from thee on the Third-day. Thomas Ellwood had one from W. P. on the Fourth-day, wherein there was very good and welcome news concerning thy health.

Bill and all thy children are well. Bill ex-

pects thy coming home at night. I bid him write to thee to come home; but he said no, he would go to London to thee. I said "If thou canst not get quiet, father will get all thy love from thee;" for he was exceedingly loving to me this morning in bed. He said, "No! no! must not get all the love from mother." My natural love makes me express these things, yet not without some fear lest I should be instrumental to draw thy mind too much into that nature which I myself want to be daily further and further drawn out of.

My dear, that the Lord may lead us more and more into His precious life, and under His holy power, and into the grace of, and subjection to His pure truth, that therein we may live to Him, and feel the daily change more and more into his holy image!

Thine in all dearness, truth, and love,

I. P.

P. S. Thomas Ellwood desires me to mind his love to thee and Guli Springett.

My soul hath been poured out, my dear, in prayer for thy health and ease, if the Lord

might see good; and for His doing thee good by the pain wherewith thou art afflicted; and for thy growth and prosperity in His truth. I also desire of the Lord prudence and wisdom, to guide me towards my children.

19th of First Month, 1667.

XLII.

FROM LETTERS: MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS.

THE Lord God preserve you, and give you to watch against, and to feel victory and dominion over, all that is contrary to Him in any of you; and which stands in the way of your fellowship with Him, and of your joy and peace in Him.

This then is the way of redemption; to wait to feel the appearance of the light of the Spirit in the heart; and at its least or lowest appearance, to be turned from the darkness towards it.

Oh! feel the redeeming arm in thine own heart, and know the love which stretcheth it

forth, and take heed of being prejudiced against its inward visitations to thee; for there is that near thee, which would darken thee, and keep the seed of life in bondage. I know there is that in thee, which pants and is not satisfied, somewhat that thirsts after the living waters. The Spirit of the Lord saith, Come, come to the fountain of eternal life; drink, and live.

The path of life is living; and thy feet must be guided into it, and walk faithfully in it to the end, if thou wilt sit down in God's eternal rest and peace.

I have had of late some deep and serious thoughts concerning thee, and a sense of thee, as between the Lord and my own soul, yet I have not had anything to signify or express to thee, till this morning. But somewhat this morning sprang up in my heart, sweetly and freshly, which I had pure drawings to impart to thee.

There was a quick sense of thee upon my heart, and in that sense this cry was in me:—Oh! that thou wert acquainted with the pure, eternal power of the Lord, and mightst feel

His outstretched arm revealed in thee, and witness the faith which stands in that power; and, in that faith, believe and wait for what God is doing, and willing to do, in and for His children.

The Lord so enlighten and guide thee, that thou mayest obtain the desires of thy heart; for, I really believe thy desire is after holiness and after communion with the Father and the Son, and with the saints in light: Oh! that thou mayest be led into the true, pure light of life, that there thou mayest enjoy what in this kind thou desirest.

Ah! little dost thou know the loving kindness of the Lord in visiting thee with His Truth, in giving thee a sense beyond others, in so tenderly drawing and inviting thy heart; or what this will come to, if thou faithfully give up to hearken to and follow Him.

Retire, deeply retire, and wait to feel His life; that thy soul may be gathered out of the reasonings and thoughts of thy mind, into that which stays from them, and fixes beneath them.

Let the earthly thoughts, desires, and con-

cerns, which eat like a canker, be kept out by the power of that life, which is yours, as ye abide in covenant with Him that hath gathered you, by His pure light shining in you.

Prize inward exercises, griefs, and troubles; and let faith and patience have their perfect work in them.

The Lord show thee the snares and dangers to which thou art liable, and lead thee out of them; that whatever hindereth may be discovered to thee, and thy mind singly joined to that which discovereth, that so it may be removed out of the way.

They that seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, in the first place, have other things also added: but, they that neglect the kingdom, and are unfaithful to Truth, seeking the world before it, the hand of the Lord goes forth against them, and they, many times, miss of that also of the world, which they seek and labor for.

If there be not a great care and watchfulness, there may be a neglecting to hear the

voice of the Shepherd, and to walk with Him ; and then, such miss of the pastures of life, and of the pure rest, joy, peace, which He administers to others.

Oh ! wait on the Lord, fear before Him, pray for His fear in the upright breathings (which are not of thy spirit's forming, but of His pure begetting ;) that thou mayest be led by Him, out of that wisdom which entangles, into that innocency, simplicity, and precious childishness, in which the Father appears to the soul, to break the bonds and snares of iniquity.

Then shall ye live the life of Truth, and no life but the life of Truth, and dwell and walk in the Truth, than which, there is no greater joy, delight, or peace to be desired or enjoyed.

Thou art often in my heart ; and indeed, I do many times bow unto the Father of spirits, for the preservation of whatever is good in thee, for the clear discovery to thee of what is not of His pure life, and for the separation of thy mind from it ; that the life of Christ

may conquer in thee, and thou thereby be fully redeemed to the Lord.

Take heed of that which prejudices and disjoins; but feel and cleave to that which uniteth in love, life, and pure power.

There is no straitness in the Fountain. God is fulness; and it is His delight to empty Himself into the hearts of His children, and He doth empty Himself, according as He makes way in them, and as they are able to drink in of His living virtue.

Therefore, where the soul is enlarged, where the senses are grown strong, where the mouth is opened wide, (the Lord God standing ready to pour out of His riches,) what should hinder it from being filled? And, being filled, how natural is it to run over, and break forth inwardly, in admiration and deep sense of spirit, concerning what it cannot utter! saying, Oh! the fulness, Oh! the depth, height, breadth, and length of the love of the Lord! Oh! the compassion, the mercy, the tenderness of our Father!

How hath He pitied, how hath He pardoned, beyond what the heart could believe!

how hath He helped in the hour of distress! how hath He conquered, and scattered the enemies! which, in the unbelief, the heart was ready often to say, were unconquerable. How hath He put an end to doubts, fears, disputes, troubles, wherewith the mind was overwhelmed and tossed! and now, He extends peace like a river; now, He puts the soul forth out of the pit, into the green pastures; now, it feeds on the freshness of life, and is satisfied, and drinks of the river of God's pleasure, and is delighted! and sings praise to the Lamb, and Him that sits on the throne, saying, Glory, glory! life, power, dominion, and majesty, over all the powers of darkness, over all the enemies of the soul, be to Thy name for evermore!

Now, my dear Friends, ye know somewhat of this, and ye know the way to it. Oh! be faithful, be faithful!—travel on, travel on; let nothing stop you; but, wait for and daily follow the sensible leadings of that measure of life, which God hath placed in you.

You will find it easy to transgress, easy to set up self, easy to run into sudden appre-

hensions about things; but feel the power to keep down all this, and to keep you out of all this.

Be not hasty, either in conceiving anything in your minds, or in speaking it forth, or in anything ye are to do; but, feel Him by His Spirit and life going along with you, and leading you into what He would have any of you, or every one of you do.

If ye be in the true feeling sense of what the Lord your God would have done, and join with what is of God, ye are all in your places and proper services, obeying the blessed will, and doing the blessed work, of the Lord your God.

There is a time to want, as well as to abound, while we are in this world. And the times of wanting, as well as abounding, are greatly advantageous to us. How should faith, love, patience, meekness, and the excellency and sufficiency of God's grace shine, but by, in, and through the many exercises and varieties of conditions, wherewith the Lord visiteth His?

SOME DIRECTIONS TO THE PANTING SOUL,

Which hath long been travelling in the Letter, but hath not yet been acquainted with the Power, nor hardly so much as entered into the Ministration of endless Life (which is the Ministration of the GOSPEL), that it may feel the Spring, and come to drink there of the living waters.

Matt. xi., 28, 29, 30.

"Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Some sweet meditations sprang in my heart concerning this portion of scripture; with breathings of spirit for those "that labor, and are heavy laden," which I find drawings to communicate.

In the gospel (which is the power of God

unto salvation) is the soul's rest. It is the doctrine of the kingdom, wherein is life, joy, peace, and everlasting rest to the soul in God.

The law had the shadow of the good things to come; but under it was not the possession of the good things themselves, but only a laboring after them, and a mourning and load because of the want of them: but in the gospel is the substance, the enjoyment; life and immortality are there brought to light, and an entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where they are felt, possessed, and enjoyed.

"The kingdom of heaven is at hand," saith the Forerunner: "it is come," saith the Messiah: and in it there is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the pure spirit of life.

It is the will of the King of Saints, that His people should enjoy the rest and peace of His gospel. He would not have them always laboring and heavy laden, as under the law; but He would have their souls feel and enjoy the ease, the liberty, the sweetness, the pure power and eternal rest of His life.

Christ hath plainly pointed out the path of His rest to every weary, panting soul, which he that walketh in cannot miss of. He hath made the way plain in the gospel, so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, yet keeping to the light of the gospel, cannot err therein, or miss of the blessed rest thereof.

How is it? Why, "come unto me; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." He that walketh in this path cannot miss of it: the rest is at the end of it, nay the rest is in it: "he that believeth entereth into the rest."

There is no rest to the soul to be enjoyed in the gospel from under the yoke. This stands eternally: that which yokes down that which would be at ease and liberty out of the life, that is the soul's true rest; there is no other: and under the yoke it is enjoyed, and not otherwise; only when that which is to be yoked down is consumed and destroyed, it is then no longer a yoke, but perfect liberty.

But the same thing which is the liberty is the yoke: and under the yoke, the sweetness, the ease, the lightsomeness, the safe posses-

sion of the life is enjoyed. Mark this therefore diligently: the yoke is not one thing, and the liberty another; but one and the same. The power of God, the life everlasting, the pure light, the divine nature, is a yoke to the transgressing nature, but it is the ease, the pleasure, the rest, the peace, the joy, the natural centre of that which is born of God.

Now to the soul that hath felt breathings towards the Lord formerly, and in whom there are yet any true breathings left after His living presence, and after the feeling of His eternal virtue in the heart, I have this to say: Where art thou? Art thou in thy soul's rest? Is thy laboring for life in a good degree at an end? And dost thou feel the life and power flowing in upon thee from the free fountain? Is the load really taken off from thy back? Dost thou find the captive redeemed, and set free from the power of sin, and the captivity broken, and he which led thee captive from the life and from the eternal power, now led captive by the life, and by the redeeming power, which is eternal?

Hast thou found this, or hast thou missed of it? Let thine heart answer.

Ah! do not imagine and talk away the rest and salvation of thy soul. The gospel-state is a state of substance, a state of enjoying the life, a state of feeling the presence and power of the Lord in His pure Holy Spirit, a state of healing, a state of knowing the Lord, and walking with Him in the light of His own Spirit.

It begins in a sweet powerful touch of life, and there is a growth in the life, (in the power, in the divine virtue, in the rest, peace, and satisfaction of the soul in God,) to be administered and waited for daily. Now art thou here, in the living power, in the divine life, joined to the spring of life, drawing water of life out of the well of life with joy? Or art thou dry, dead, barren, sapless, or at best but unsatisfiedly mourning after what thou wantest?

Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thy own desiring to know or to be anything, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and

let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find, by sweet experience, that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is its portion.

And as thou takest up the cross to thyself, and sufferest that to overspread and become a yoke over thee, thou shalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the everlasting inheritance in that.

Let nothing judge in thee (concerning thine own heart, or concerning others, or concerning any way or truth of God), but only the begotten of God in the heart. Be not hasty, be not forward in judgment; keep back to the life, still waiting for the appearance and openings of the life.

A few steps fetched in the life and power of God are much safer and sweeter than an hasty progress in the hasty, forward spirit.

When the night comes upon thee, and thou perhaps art at a loss, missing the savor and presence of the life, and not knowing how to come by it again, be patient and still, and

thou wilt find breathings after a fresh visitation, and a meek, humble, broken spirit before the Lord.

Thou wilt see that thou canst do nothing to recover His presence again; nay, thou canst not so much as wait for Him, or breathe after Him, without His help; but He is nigh to the poor, nigh to the broken, nigh to the distressed, nigh to the helpless.

In the night of distress, feel after somewhat which may quiet and stay thy heart till the next springing of the day. The sun will arise, which will scatter the clouds; and He is near thee who will give thee to hope that thou shalt yet see God, and find again the quickenings and leadings of His spirit.

And in the day of His power thou wilt find strength to walk with Him; yea, in the day of thy weakness His grace will be sufficient for thee; and He will nurture thee up in His life by His pure Spirit, causing thee to grow under His shadow; and He will be teaching thee to live, and to speak, and to move and act from the principle, and within the compass of His light and life eternal.

A FEW EXPERIENCES CONCERNING SOME OF THE WEIGHTY THINGS RELATING TO GOD'S EVERLASTING KINGDOM,

Given forth in true and tender Love, for the Help of any such of the Race of the true Travellers as may stand in need thereof.

This hath been the cry of my soul from my childhood, even after holiness, after the presence of the Lord, after union with Him, after the nature and image of His Son, after separation from what was contrary to Him, and a being brought forth in the power of His life.

Now, blessed be the Lord, that is revealed which answers the cry; which, so far as my soul comes to partake of, it is refreshed and satisfied with the supply of that, which it thirsted and cried after.

And all that have felt the true cry, Oh! that they might also be taught of God, and learn aright how to wait upon Him, and to walk humbly and in fear before Him, that

nothing might come between them and the cry of their souls; but they might be led by Him into the enjoyment and possession of that, which the true birth (which is born of the Spirit, and is Spirit) naturally longs after.

Is it not the will of God that His people and children should be sanctified throughout, in soul, in body, in spirit?

Is it not the will of Christ, that His disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect?

Did He not bid them pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven?" And would He never have them believe and expect that it should be done in earth, as it is in heaven?

Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will He dwell where sin dwells? He may indeed to such, when at any time they are tender, and truly melted before Him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but He will not take up His abode there, walk there, sup there, and give them to sup with Him.

While people were in expectation, and

mused in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Christ or no, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not he that baptizeth with water, but he "that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." He "whose fan is in his hand," wherewith He cometh "thoroughly to purge His floor, gathering the wheat into His garner, and burning the chaff with fire unquenchable."

"Our God is a consuming fire," saith the apostle. To what is He a consuming fire? Is it not to the chaffy, earthy, drossy nature in men and women? Why, bring the chaff near to the fire, will it not burn up? And then (as that is burnt up and consumed) that which is pure, that which is upright, that which is tender, that which is born of God, can dwell with, and delight in, the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings.

For God is not terrible to the child which is born of Him, to him who is brought forth in the image and spirit of His Son; but to the transgressing nature, to the seed of evil doers, which are naturally inclined to do evil,

and every day doing evil, He is terrible for evermore.

Doth God's Spirit lead thee into all truth that thou needest know and walk in? Art thou a true child, depending upon, and guided by, the Spirit of the Father? Canst thou not see thy way, but as He maketh it known to thee? Art thou a follower of the spotless Lamb, in the same Spirit wherein He walked? If it be thus with thee, then thou art a child of God indeed. Dost thou live in the Spirit? Dost thou feel the Spirit of God to be a fountain of life, from whence life springs up into thee daily?

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